

Mail Classification and Rates:
Official Mail

137.251a

right corner of the address side the printed statement of the penalty of misuse: *Penalty for Private Use to Avoid Payment of Postage, \$300*. The printed statement of the penalty for misuse may not be handwritten or typewritten. They must also show, over the words *Official Business* in the upper left corner of the address side, the name and address of the department, bureau, office, or officer. The following markings are required, when applicable:

- a. Official mail of designated State extension directors must bear in the upper left corner the name of the agricultural college and the name of the post office at which the mail is to be accepted without prepayment of postage, followed by the name and title of the designated officer and the words *Cooperative Agricultural Extension Work—Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914*.
- b. Official mailings by agricultural experiment stations must bear in the upper left corner of the address side the name of the station, the name of the post office at which the matter is to be accepted, and the name and title of the officer in charge of the station, followed by the word *Publication*. The title of the bulletin or report may be used.

.233 Prepaid Postage

Official mail which is not sent as penalty mail or as postage and fees paid mail must have postage prepaid. The regular rates and conditions apply except that postage on official mail weighing over 4 pounds may be paid at the fourth-class rates. See 137.251.

.24 USE

.241 The markings authorized on official mail in 137.23 may not be placed on other mail to avoid payment of postage or special service fees.

.242 Any department or office authorized to use the official mail privilege may furnish self-addressed envelopes or labels to persons or concerns for their convenience in submitting official information desired by any U.S. Government department or agency. Reply envelopes may not be furnished to bidders or contractors, or to enable private persons or concerns to send without prepayment of postage reports or other information which they are required by law to make.

.243 The right of an officer to use the official mail privilege ceases immediately on his going out of office.

.244 Official matter of those departments and agencies listed in 137.231b that is marked *Postage and Fees Paid* (name of department or agency) shall be given any special service, including airmail, when it is so marked by the sender without requiring prepayment of postage or fees. See 221.242b regarding international mail.

.245 Airmail and the special services may not be given official mail in penalty envelopes without prepayment of air postage or prepayment of the appropriate fee for the special service requested. **EXCEPTION:** Penalty envelopes of a President-elect (Sec. 137.7) and those containing urgent official communications of the Postal Service may be sent airmail without prepayment of the postage. Official mail of the Postal Service may be sent as registered, certified, or special delivery mail without prepayment of the postage or fees.

.25 WEIGHT AND SIZE LIMITS

.251 Weight

- a. *Penalty mail.* No article or package of official matter, or number of articles or packages of official matter, constituting in fact a single shipment exceeding 4 pounds may be admitted to the mail under the *penalty* privilege except stamped paper and supplies sold or used by the Postal Service, and books or documents published or circulated by order of

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Congress when mailed by the Superintendent of Documents. Official matter in packages exceeding 4 pounds, if otherwise mailable, will be accepted on payment of postage at the fourth-class rates within the limits of weight prescribed for such matter. (See 135.31.) Such parcels may be sealed or unsealed, and may include written matter when mailed at those rates. Official matter of the Postal Service, and books and documents circulated by order of Congress when mailed by the Superintendent of Documents, may weigh up to 70 pounds.

- b. *Postage and Fees Paid Mail*. Maximum weight same as 135.31 except airmail. See 136.3.
- c. *Prepaid Government Mail*. Maximum weight same as 135.31 except airmail. See 136.3.

.252 *Size, Shape, Ratio, and Sealing*. The provisions of sections 122.3, 131.217, 131.32, 134.22, 134.32, 134.8, 135.32, and 136.32 apply.

137.3 MAIL SENT TO GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

.31 **CENSUS MAIL**. All mail, of whatever class, relating to the census and addressed to the Census Office, or to any official thereof, and endorsed *Official Business, Census Office*, will be sent without prepayment of postage. Such mail may not exceed 4 pounds. (See 137.21 regarding postage reimbursement.) Mail sent by the Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce or one of its officers in envelopes of that Bureau is subject to the conditions in 137.231.

.32 **IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE MAIL**. All mail of whatever class, relating to naturalization, including duplicate papers required by law or regulation to be sent to the Service by clerks of courts addressed to the Department of Justice or the Immigration and Naturalization Service, or any official of either, and endorsed *Official Business*, will be transmitted without prepayment of postage and marked *Naturalization Papers*. Mail relating to naturalization may not exceed 4 pounds. (See 137.21 regarding postage reimbursement.)

137.4 STATE EMPLOYMENT SECURITY MAILINGS

All mail of State employment security offices cooperating with the Department of Labor that bears, in the upper left corner of the address side, the words *Official Business* printed immediately below the name and address of the State employment agency and, in the upper right corner, the words *Postage and Fees Paid, Employment Security Mail* will be accepted without prepayment of postage or fees. Postage and fees chargeable are collected periodically under a special arrangement with the Post Office Department. Such matter will be given the service indicated on the cover.

137.5 DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR MAIL

.51 **DIPLOMATIC MAIL**. All correspondence (written or printed) of members of the Diplomatic Corps of the countries of the Postal Union of the Americas and Spain stationed in the United States may be reciprocally transmitted in the domestic mail without prepayment of postage. This correspondence may not exceed 4 pounds in weight. The envelopes, cards, tags, wrappers, and labels must show in the upper left corner of the address side the name of the Ambassador or the Minister or the name of the Embassy or Legation, together with the post office address; and in the upper right corner the inscription *Diplomatic Mail* over the word *Free*. These inscriptions may be handwritten, handstamped, or printed.